

SENATE RESOLUTION 184

By Harris

A RESOLUTION to recognize and congratulate Reverend Sonia Loudon Walker upon her receipt of the Catalyst Award from the Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this legislative body acknowledge and applaud those estimable Tennesseans who have devoted themselves to serving their communities; and

WHEREAS, one such individual is Reverend Sonia Loudon Walker, who was recently named a 2018 Legends Award honoree and the recipient of the Catalyst Award by the Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis, an honor most befitting her many years of service to the Memphis community; and

WHEREAS, the Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis has, for over two decades, played a major role as a backbone organization, aligning people and resources and coordinating community-based services through the two-generation approach with the ultimate aim of reducing poverty in Memphis; and

WHEREAS, the organization encourages philanthropy and fosters leadership among women, and it honors these same virtues in those who have distinguished themselves as leaders in the community, through the Legends Award; and

WHEREAS, the Legends Award, created in 2009, honors trend-setters, visionaries, and innovators who have risen to the top of their fields and use their knowledge and skills to better the community; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Sonia Loudon Walker currently serves as the associate pastor at First Congregational Church in midtown Memphis; when she arrived in Memphis in 1974, the mother of three sons and the wife of the new president of LeMoyne-Owen College, she had

already had a career in education and health care. She took a job as director of community relations at WHBQ-TV, beginning a sixteen-year term as manager of public affairs programming and community service projects for the ABC affiliate; and

WHEREAS, the station's annual Feeding Families food drive provided food for hungry families and led to Reverend Walker's involvement with Mid-South Food Bank, and a lifelong commitment to help end hunger in the community; she was instrumental in helping the food bank expand their food ministry from a small snack program to initiatives that provided over 900 meals and groceries to almost 400 households each month; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Sonia Loudon Walker has served on public boards, hosted "A Closer Look," and delivered editorials, addressing social issues and solutions; out of a lifelong commitment to education and children, she staffed and equipped the first office of Partners in Public Education and served as executive director; and

WHEREAS, she has served on numerous boards and advisory committees, including the Chamber of Commerce, the Memphis Literacy Foundation, the Mid-South Food Bank, the Memphis Jobs Conference, and the National Conference of Christians and Jews; she is a founding board member of Leadership Memphis and was the first woman and the first person of color to serve as chair, and she is an honorary trustee of the Community Foundation of Greater Memphis; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Walker has worked diligently to better the lives of her fellow citizens, and she is most worthy of our approbation; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby recognize and congratulate Reverend Sonia Loudon Walker upon her receipt of the Catalyst Award from the Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis, extending our best wishes for much continued success and happiness in all her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.